

After years of protest from animal activists, the LD50 Test (in which animals are force fed or exposed to chemicals to estimate the dose needed to kill 50% of them) is slowly being phased out internationally and is being replaced with tests that use fewer animals [or none at all]. A recent workshop held by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), a government agency that researches the health effects of environmental hazards, addressed the feasibility of going one step further and replacing the animal tests completely with in-vitro cell culture tests. Scientists at the NIEHS workshop have agreed to a partial implementation of in vitro testing, to set a "starting dose" for the lethal poisoning tests, which would have the effect of further reducing the number of animals in the tests. The NIEHS is inviting the public to comment on the findings of these scientists and the use of in-vitro cell cultures as a replacement for lethal animal tests.

I am in full support of your efforts to reduce or entirely eliminate the use of animals in these horrendous LD50 tests. Please continue your efforts in that regard.

Michael Fenton